

**Black River Environmental Health Services**

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**Public Health**   
Seattle & King County

April 8, 2010

To: Marine Recovery Area Property Owners

From: Larry Fay, Community Environmental Health Section Manager

**RE: Alternative Septic System Vendor Fair Saturday May 8, 2010 from 11:00 to 2:00  
Chautauqua Elementary School, 9309 SW Cemetery Rd Vashon Island**

Here is another chance to take an up-close look at some state-of-the-art alternative septic system technologies. Vendors will set up models and/or displays of systems designed for the needs of small, often steep shoreline lots, including aerobic treatment units, recirculation packed bed filters, composting and incinerating toilets, and, new this year, a membrane bioreactor and a passive peat filter that replaces a standard drainfield, but with a much smaller footprint. All systems displayed are on the List of Registered On-Site Treatment and Distribution Products as established in Chapter 246-272A WAC and approved for use in King County in Public Health–Seattle King County Title 13, Chapter 13.52 regulating On-Site Sewage.

There will be short presentations at 11:30, 12:00 and 12:30 to welcome the public, introduce vendors and provide an overview of on-site septic concerns on Vashon-Maury Island, including an explanation of the design/permit/installation process by John Thomas, executive director, of Washington On-Site Sewage Association (WOSSA) and Lee McIntire, a septic system designer familiar with the alternative technologies.

This year the Vashon-Maury Island (VMI) Community Council Septic Solutions Committee will be handing out free septic testing dye to homeowners within the Marine Recovery Area, to allow them to dye test their own septic systems. This test will not replace a test by a licensed on-site sewage system inspector for Public Health regulatory purposes but it can help homeowners learn more about their system and get some idea of whether or not it is failing.

Property owners in the 290 parcel Marine Recovery Area on Vashon-Maury Islands are required to inspect, document and repair or replace septic systems, if needed, by July 1, 2012.

The event is co-sponsored by the VMI Septic Solutions Committee, VMI Groundwater Protection Committee, VMI Water Purveyors Association, Public Health Seattle King County and Washington On-Site Sewage Association.

**Attachments:**

- **Marine Recovery Area Background**
- **2010 Sludge Fest Alternative On-Site Sewage System Vendors List**

## **Marine Recovery Area Background**

As you may be aware from previous mailings, your property has been included in the Marine Recovery Area (MRA). In 2008 the Public Health Seattle & King County Board of Health adopted an On-Site Septic System Management Plan designating the MRA for certain portions of Vashon-Maury Island that are within or adjoining "prohibited" or "unclassified" shellfish harvest areas. Property owners within the MRA need to inspect, and repair or replace their On-Site Sewage (OSS) system, if needed, by July 1, 2012, then annually inspect OSS function.

To address the MRA designation, property owners should obtain a professional inspection of their OSS to document the system type, location, function and prepare an as-built plan of the system if one does not already exist. If the professional inspection determines that the OSS is not functioning, owners should work with a licensed OSS designer to evaluate options to repair, replace, or install an alternate method of treating their wastewater.

## **Marine Recovery Area Objectives**

In the Quartermaster Harbor MRA area Public Health Seattle & King County has been working since 2005 with approximately 175 property owners to complete an OSS inventory and identify systems that need repair or replacement. Where the inventory has been completed the focus is to work with property owners, OSS designers and OSS installers to repair or replace the failing OSS. The short term goal is to correct enough of the failing OSS to entirely or partially lift shellfish harvest restrictions in the area.

In the East Passage MRA area, Public Health Seattle & King County will work with approximately 115 property owners to educate them about the MRA project, septic problems and potential solutions. The short term goal is to complete an inventory of OSS for each of the five sub-areas in the East Passage MRA.

Longer term, the goals for implementation of the MRA include:

- Making significant progress on repair or replacement of failing OSS in both the Quartermaster Harbor and East Passage areas and,
- Evaluation of existing and new data to identify other potential MRA's to reduce the number of failing OSS and improve water quality.

## **Web Resources**

Public Health Seattle-King County has assembled a variety of resources to assist MRA owners at our web site at <http://www.kingcounty.gov/healthservices/health/ehs.aspx> including:

- **King County Onsite System Management Plan**
- **Updated MRA maps showing individual parcels and the status of the OSS for each parcel**
- **OSS As-Built Plans and Inspection Records**
- **OSS Inspection Report Form for MRA and Time of Sale**
- **Technical Assistance**
- **Frequently Asked Questions**
- **State Approved On-Site Treatment Systems and Products**
- **Quartermaster Harbor Community System Wastewater Treatment Options Report**
- **Marine Recovery Area Background Information**
- **MRA press releases and news articles**
- **Partners seeking solutions to OSS problems on VMI**